

Section 9 Animals in art

Guiding Faculty

Albert Dorner, Founder
[1904-1965]

Norman Rockwell
Al Parker
Ben Stahl
Stevan Dohanos
Jon Whitcomb
Robert Fawcett
Peter Helck
Austin Briggs
Harold Van Schmidt
George Giusti
Fred Ludekens
Bernard Fuchs
Bob Peak
Tom Allen
Lorraine Fox
Franklin McMahon

Ben Shahn
Doris Lee
Doug Klingman
Arnold Blanch
Adolf Dehn
Fletcher Martin
Willi Barnett
Syd Solomon
Julian Levi
Joseph Hirsch

Milton Caniff
Al Capp
Dick Cavalli
Whitney Darrow, Jr.
Rube Goldberg
Harry Haenigsen
Willard Mullin
Virgil Partch
Barney Tobey



Animals in Art

Picasso's ideas often begin with the forms of objects he finds. In his hands, the handlebars and seat of an old bicycle were transformed into the head of a bull—and a delightful piece of art.

Bull's Head out of a Bicycle Seat
Permission SPADEM 1967,
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Edward Hicks
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection

If you like to draw animals, you're going to have fun with this section, and when you finish it you'll know much more about the *how* of animal drawing than you do now. You'll learn how to draw them standing and sitting and how to catch them in motion. You'll be more aware of what to look for, what characteristics make them the particular beings they are, and you'll strive to emphasize these qualities in your drawing. We want you to put more into a horse drawing than his graceful lines; more into a tiger than a facsimile of his stripes. Your lion should convey some lionish quality—even a funny lion has to have lion traits. Your animal drawings may or may not be realistic—that's your choice to make. You don't have to be literal as long as the right animal feeling is there.

Animals have their own characteristics and ways of life, but they're also the closest creatures to us in Nature and we like to see in them our own characteristics, too. This inclination of ours gives animals a tremendously expressive potential for the artist. Look at the two paintings on this page.

They're interesting, among other reasons, because they express, through animals, two conflicting viewpoints of man. The one above, called *The Peaceable Kingdom*, is a charming primitive that portrays the biblical ideal of peace in this world, with all the wide-eyed trust of a child. The Audubon painting below, far less sentimental and more realistic, centers on an opposing theme that is just as close to the nature of man—the struggle for survival. Both paintings hold appeal not only in their subject matter, but in what they say to us.

You'll find on the following pages some suggestions of places to go to draw animals, you'll learn how they move, and you'll learn about the differences in their proportions and structure, which will be helpful when you draw them. There are some ideas, too, for creating animals out of such unbestly materials as a toothbrush and a piece of screen. On every page you'll learn something that will help you use animals more effectively in your art to express your own thoughts and feelings.

Osprey and the Otter and the Salmon, John James Audubon
Arizona State University at Tempe Gift of Oliver B. James



At zoos

Zoos, even small ones, have such a variety of animals to draw, the danger is that you'll try to cover too many. Be sensible and single out just a few, then sketch each of them many times over. As a way of warming up, begin with very quick sketches.



Ben Stahl

Where to go to draw animals

Drawing animals is like drawing people, landscapes, still life or anything else. You'll have more success when you work from the real thing. In drawing animals, use living models whenever you can. They'll give you the spontaneity, the sense of animal spirit that you must bring to your drawing if it's to look convincing and alive.

You may be a little shy about drawing in public, but just try to concentrate very hard on your work and you'll soon forget that anyone else is around. Don't carry a lot of equipment with you. All you need is a sketchbook and a pencil—although you might want to take along a pen and some charcoal for variety.

Any of the Faculty artists whose drawings illustrate these two pages would tell you that it takes time to learn to draw animals really well. Even so, it's fun from the start. You'll never tire of them because they keep changing positions, attitudes and moods and the more skilled you become, the more you'll find about animals that you'll want to capture on paper.



Harold Von Schmidt

At museums

Although stuffed and mounted animals aren't alive, there's one thing about them that's very helpful—they stay still. That means you'll have all the time you need with them to study their proportions and to observe the characteristics that distinguish one animal from another.

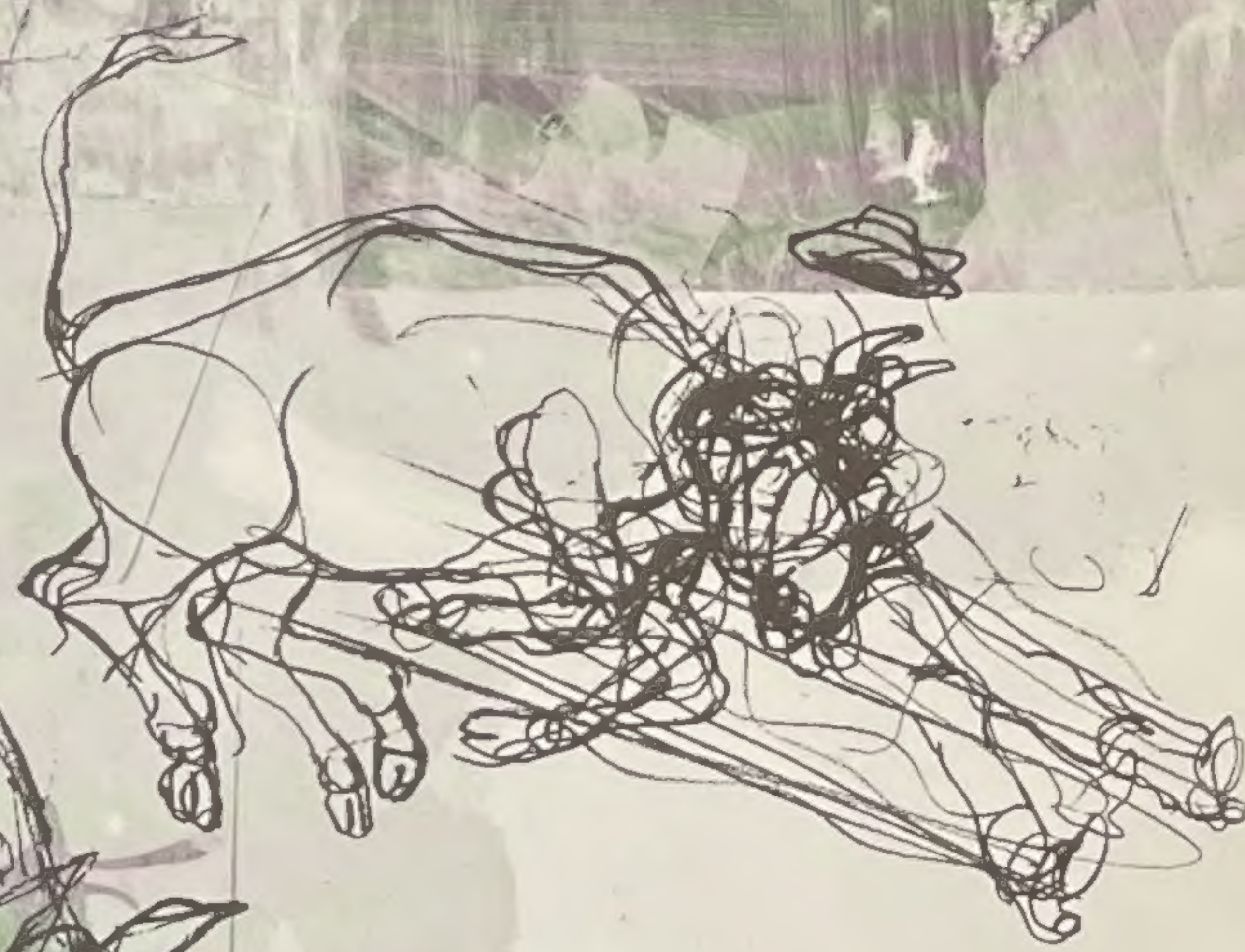


At farms

If you can get to a farm, go there often and draw. It's helpful to observe and sketch animals in their natural surroundings. Too, you'll like the freedom of being all alone, away from the public eye.



Franklin McMahon



At events

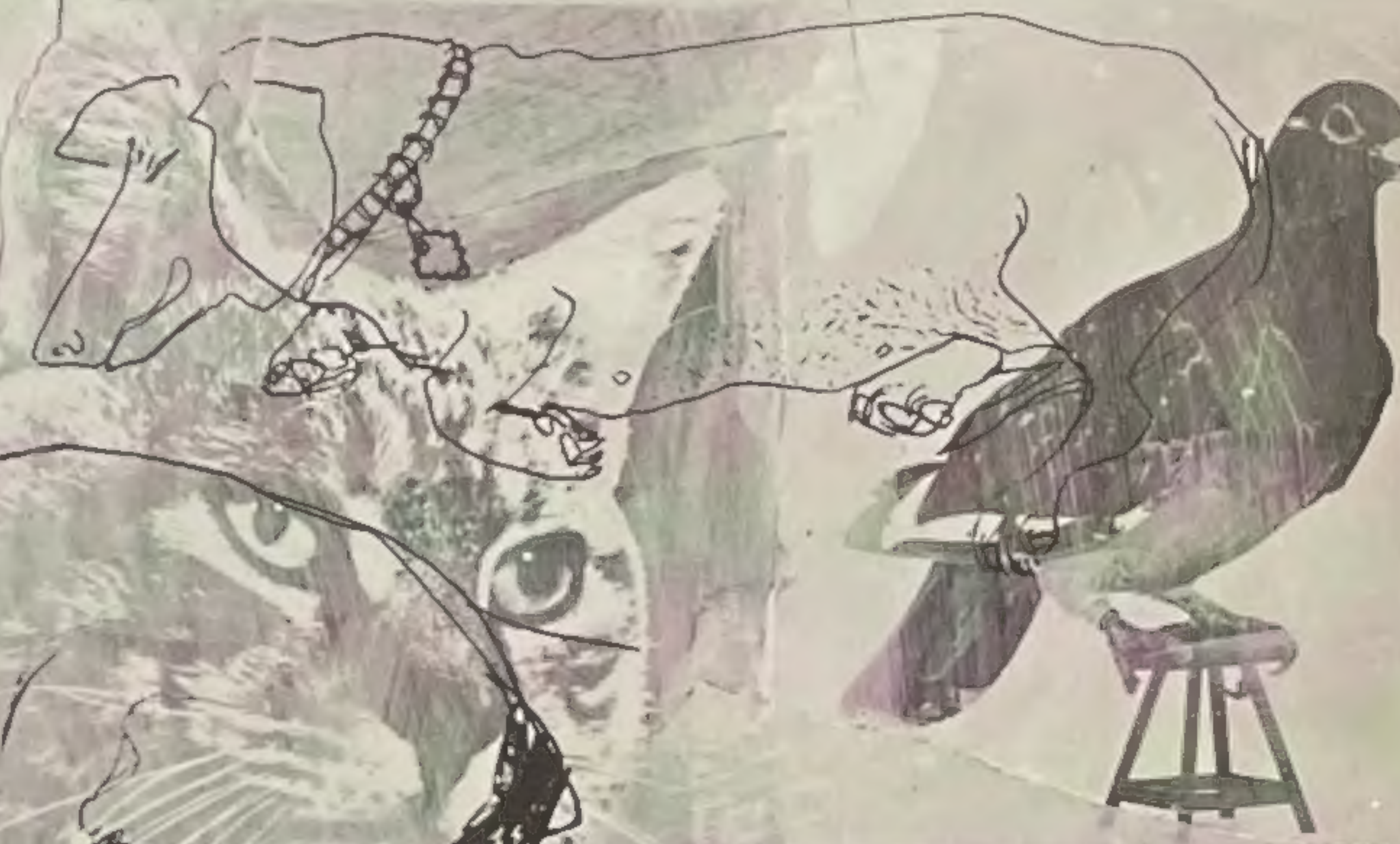
Events like rodeos, circuses, parades, county fairs, horse and dog shows are all loaded with good animal subjects. You may have to sketch very fast, particularly if you want to catch the action of a moment, as Franklin McMahon did with these sketches made at a rodeo.

At home

Cat, dog, bird, fish, rabbit, turtle, snake—whatever kind of pet you have, draw him over and over, in different positions and moods. Dogs make good subjects because they're usually up to something. Sketch yours when he's eating, sleeping, running, scratching, stretching, digging for a bone, barking and begging. Drawing him repeatedly will teach you something about the way animals are put together and about the way they move.



Lorraine Fox





"But they won't hold still . . ."

Unlike your friends, animals can't be cajoled into standing still while you draw them. You just have to have your pencil ready whenever they decide to quiet down.

Every animal has to stop, at least briefly, to eat and sleep. Dogs and cats love to take naps—you can make dozens of sketches of them before they wake up. You'll have to work faster if you want to draw them when they eat. If they're really hungry, they'll stay still just about long enough for one quick drawing. Don't linger over any one part very long. The important thing is to catch the essential pose, the expression of the whole body before the animal moves. That will give you an indication of his structure, position and proportions, which you can develop in more detail if you want to, later on.



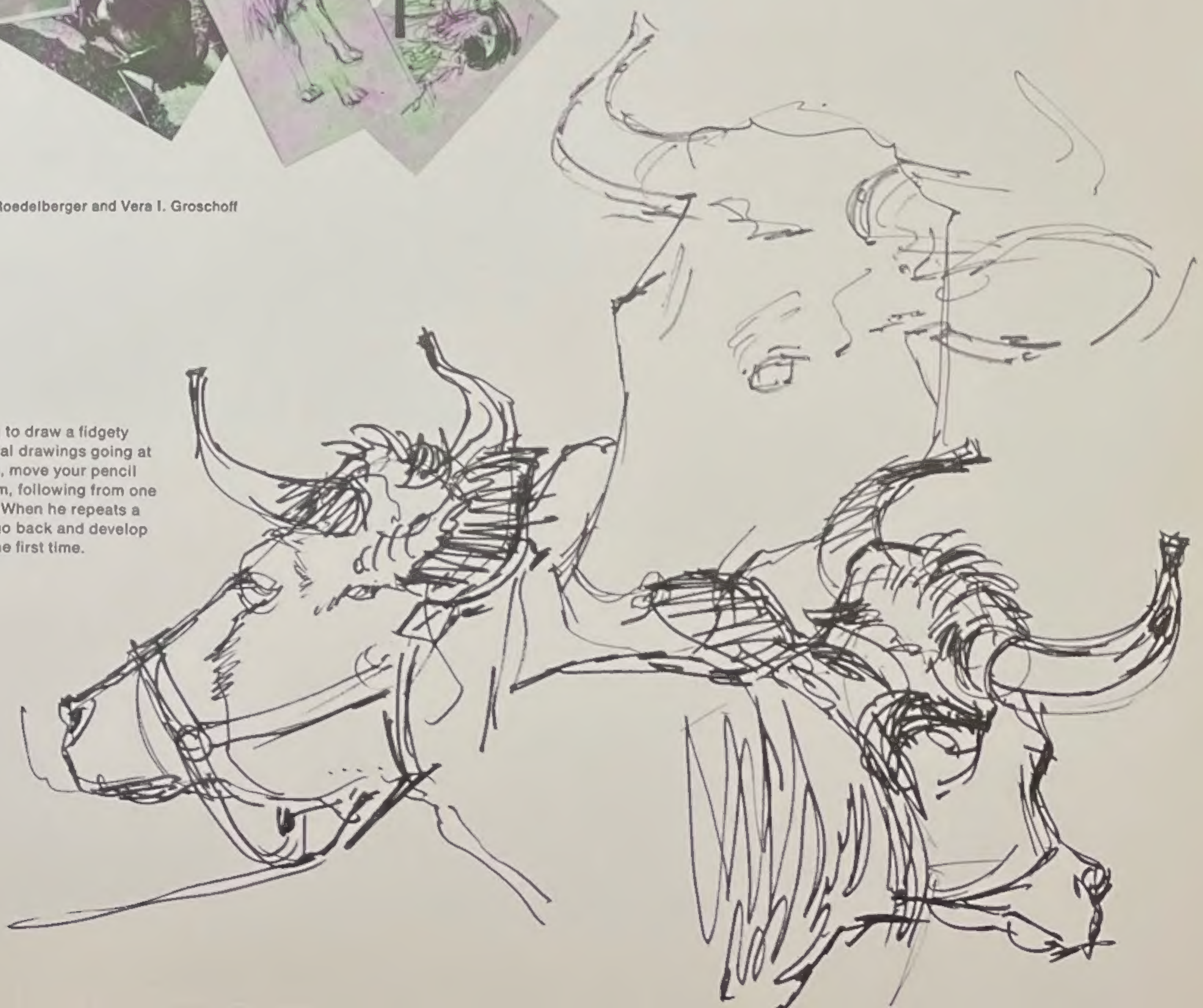
If you're in the mood to draw your dog when he doesn't happen to be eating or sleeping, get someone to keep him happily quiet by talking to him or scratching him behind the ear.

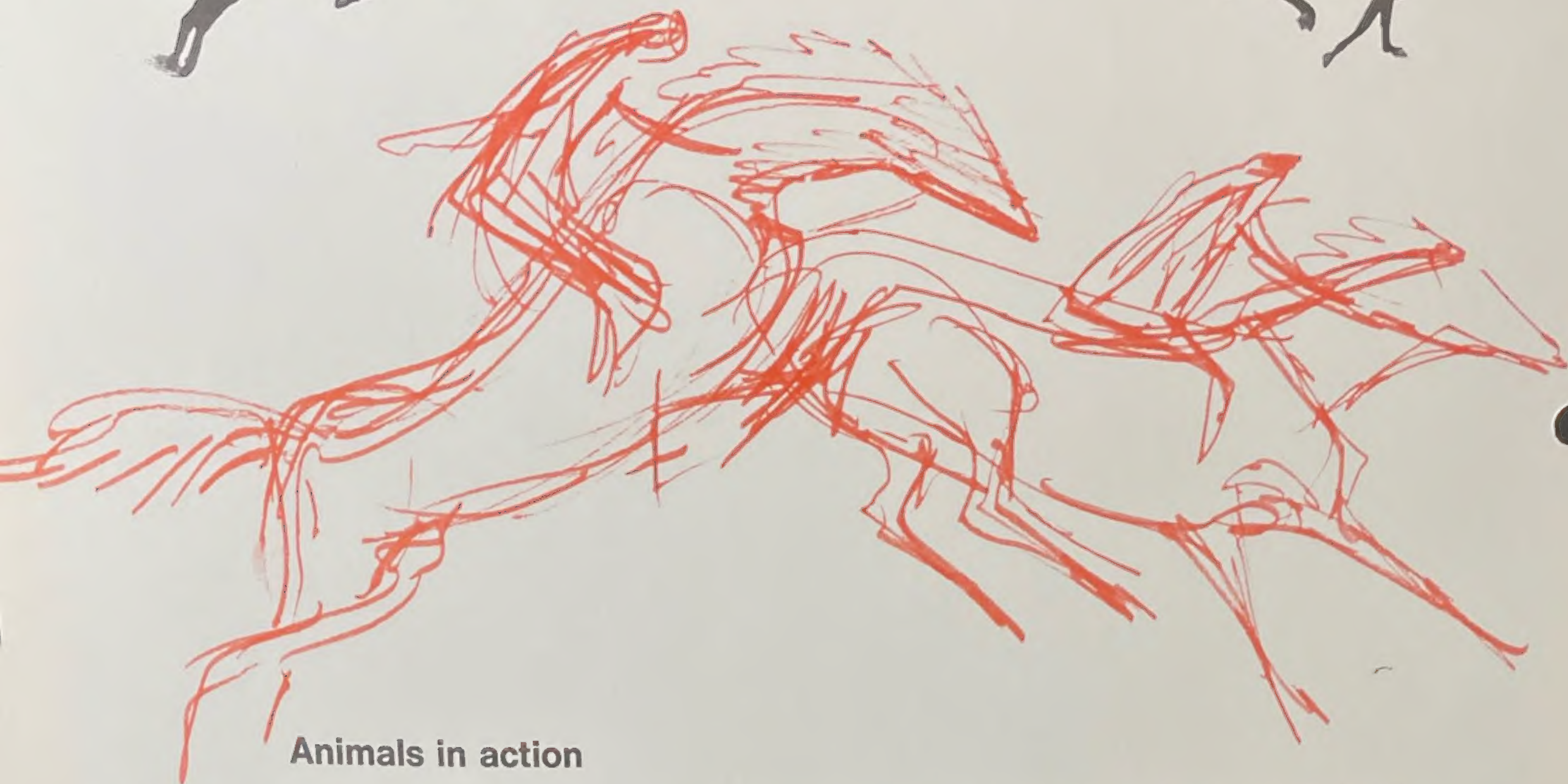


You can get quite a lot of information about animals by drawing them from pictures in books and magazines. This kind of practice will actually help you draw them more accurately when you work from life, because you'll be more aware of what to look for. Be sure, though, not to make a literal copy of what you see in the picture. Use it as reference material, but make your drawing in your own way.

The Wonders of Wildlife, Franz A. Roedelberger and Vera I. Groschoff
The Viking Press, Inc., New York

When you're trying to draw a fidgety animal, keep several drawings going at once. As he moves, move your pencil right along with him, following from one sketch to the next. When he repeats a position, you can go back and develop what you missed the first time.





Animals in action

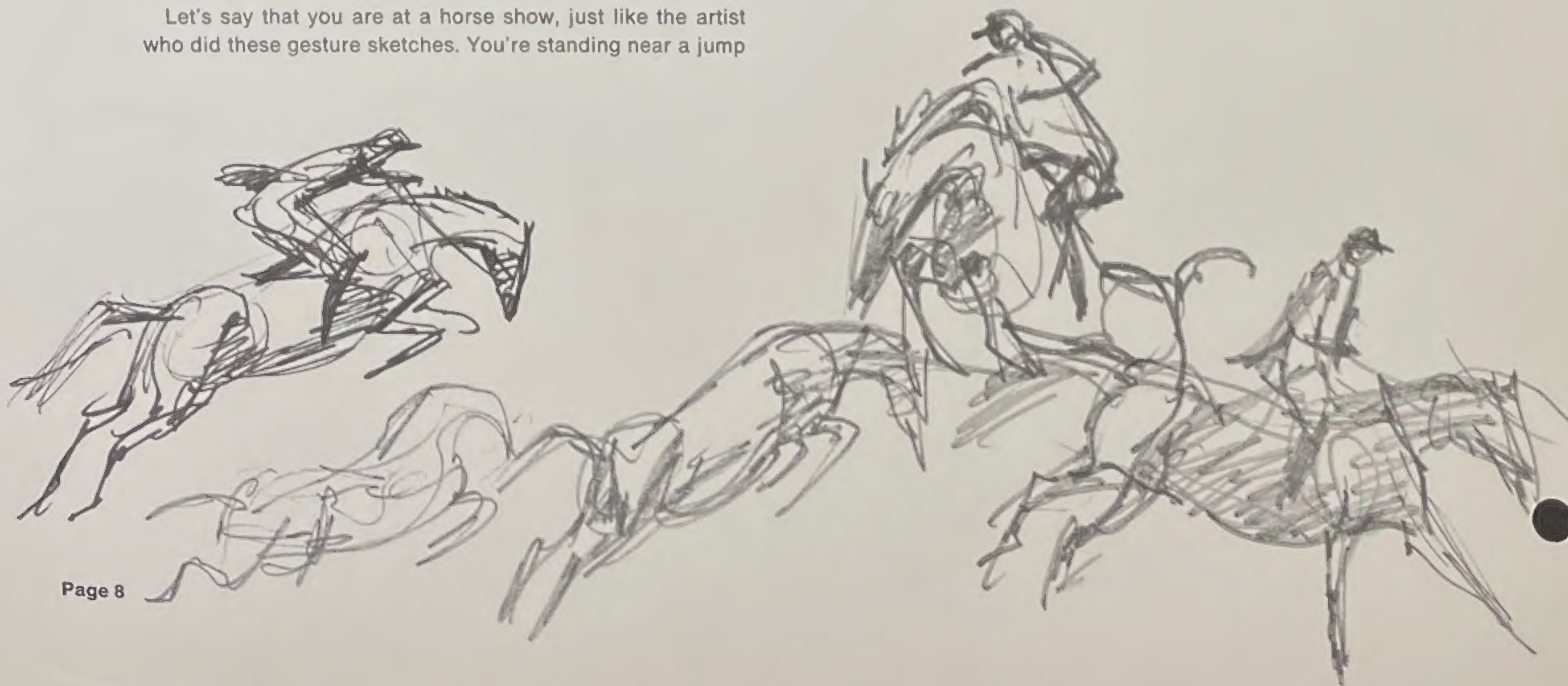
It's a challenge to try to catch an animal in motion, but probably not as hard as you think. On these pages we've demonstrated four approaches to action drawing that should make it easier for you. Try them all.

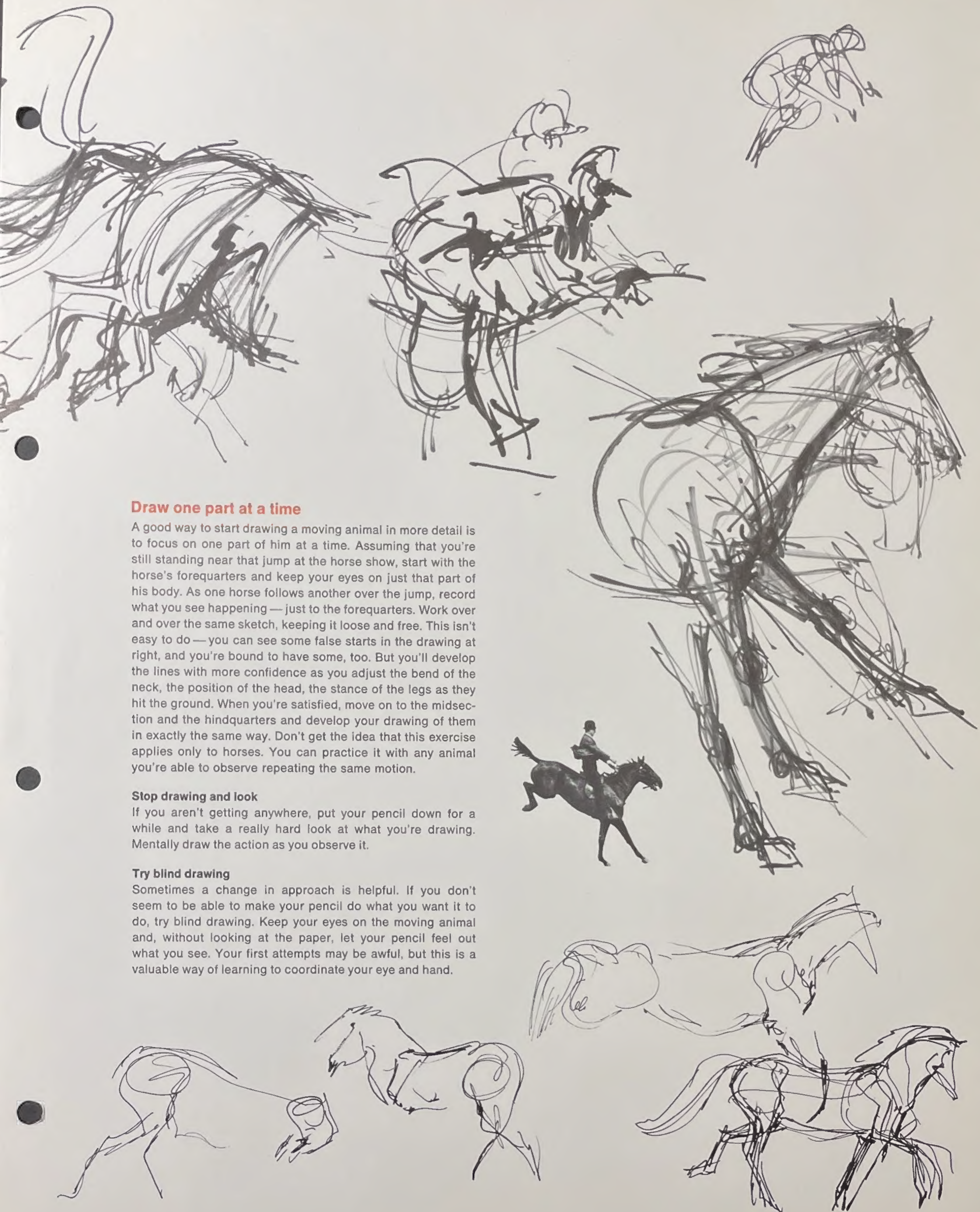
The best way to get into the rhythm of this kind of drawing is to watch an animal, or a number of them, repeating the same action over and over. All of these drawings were made at a horse show where the artist stood in one spot and sketched as fast as he could as the horses took the jump, one after another, and thundered by. Horse shows are made-to-order spectacles for action drawing; so are rodeos and circuses and county fairs. And so are the Westerns you watch on television.

Let's say that you are at a horse show, just like the artist who did these gesture sketches. You're standing near a jump

and the first horse is going over. Start your pencil moving over the paper to catch the gesture, trying to get the feel of the whole jump. You'll probably draw just a line or two the first time, but keep trying with the next jump and the next. After a while your pencil will follow the whole sweep of the action and your drawings will express it as freely and accurately as many of the examples on these pages.

Try this method of capturing motion wherever you can find animals going through a particular act over and over. How about the zoo? A caged lion pacing back and forth, back and forth, would make a fine subject.





Draw one part at a time

A good way to start drawing a moving animal in more detail is to focus on one part of him at a time. Assuming that you're still standing near that jump at the horse show, start with the horse's forequarters and keep your eyes on just that part of his body. As one horse follows another over the jump, record what you see happening — just to the forequarters. Work over and over the same sketch, keeping it loose and free. This isn't easy to do — you can see some false starts in the drawing at right, and you're bound to have some, too. But you'll develop the lines with more confidence as you adjust the bend of the neck, the position of the head, the stance of the legs as they hit the ground. When you're satisfied, move on to the midsection and the hindquarters and develop your drawing of them in exactly the same way. Don't get the idea that this exercise applies only to horses. You can practice it with any animal you're able to observe repeating the same motion.

Stop drawing and look

If you aren't getting anywhere, put your pencil down for a while and take a really hard look at what you're drawing. Mentally draw the action as you observe it.

Try blind drawing

Sometimes a change in approach is helpful. If you don't seem to be able to make your pencil do what you want it to do, try blind drawing. Keep your eyes on the moving animal and, without looking at the paper, let your pencil feel out what you see. Your first attempts may be awful, but this is a valuable way of learning to coordinate your eye and hand.



The Derby at Epsom
Cliché des Musées Nationaux
Louvre, Paris

Animal action in art

There are so many ways to portray animals in action it would be impossible to single out one of them and say: "This is the *right* way." The only fair measure is whether or not the artist succeeds in making the feeling of action convincing. If he does, he's found his own right way.

Of course, the more you know about how an animal looks when he moves, the more convincing your drawing will probably be, but even if you don't know exactly how a hawk flies or a shark cuts through the water, it doesn't matter — *if* you can make us feel and believe their actions in your drawings.

The painting above by Géricault is remarkable because it

portrays animal action which is completely convincing, even though it's inaccurately drawn. Did you ever see a horse run with all his legs stretched out in midair? Of course not. Yet that's what these horses are doing, and they're not only running, they're racing! Géricault created the illusion of motion so beautifully, his horses' way of running feels correct.

The examples on these pages demonstrate how six artists created motion in art. Study them. Seeing the ways these people made animals come alive will help you in your search for ways to give the illusion of action to the animals you draw — and make it believable.

Action in shape

There is explosive action in these illustrations, conveyed by the way Faculty member Fred Ludekens has drawn the animals' shapes. Carefully observed shapes, drawn with knowledge and control, catch and make us sense a desperate struggle for freedom.



Courtesy Blue Bell, Inc.



Action in anatomy

Contorted shapes and the visible tautness of pulling muscles freeze the moment when a horse rears and a bull lunges forward — both in extremities of action. You can see that a thorough knowledge of animal mechanics and anatomy went into the drawing of these two straining, twisted bodies.



Courtesy Harold Von Schmidt

Don't miss the... from the... of the...



Action in multiple image

The dog on a twirling leash is an excellent example of one means of making rapid motion visible. This method of depicting movement was widely used by a group of artists called the Futurists who painted early in the century, and is the same technique the cave artist employed over 25,000 years ago to show a running boar, a fleeing deer

Symbolic motion

Out of earthbound bronze, Brancusi molded his poetic vision of the free, soaring grace of a bird in flight. The fluid character of the form contributes to the motion — your eyes slide smoothly upward. While this is a symbolic work, it is real in that it enables us to feel the beautiful, effortless rise of a bird into space.

Jonah, Albert Pinkham Ryder
Courtesy National Collection of Fine Arts
The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C

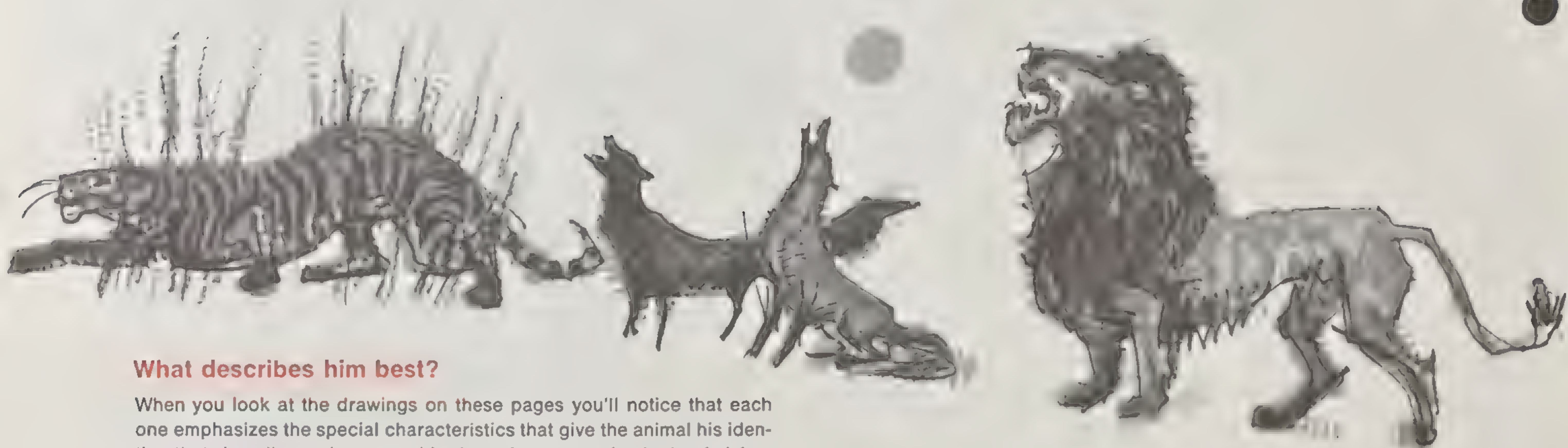


Action in composition

Here the artist makes us feel the thrust of a giant whale by setting the whole composition in motion. The path the animal cuts through the dark water creates a pattern of rhythmic, swirling masses that surround and nearly engulf him. The whale and the whole world within the borders of the canvas surge with powerful movement.

Bird in Space
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York





What describes him best?

When you look at the drawings on these pages you'll notice that each one emphasizes the special characteristics that give the animal his identity, that describe and express him best. In some animals, hooved feet and long legs for running are the most distinctive features. Others have claws and short limbs on which to crouch and stalk their prey. Some are climbers, others are gallopers or leapers or jumpers or pouncers. There are those who stick together, others who go it alone.

Think about these things whenever you draw an animal; ask yourself how you can describe him best. Visualize how and where he lives and what he eats. Remember who his enemies are, and be particularly aware of the ingenious ways nature has equipped him to fend for himself. If you know and understand him first, you'll communicate something about his essential self in what you draw. That can make the difference between just a competent rendering of an animal and a drawing that looks real and exciting and alive.



Many of the hunted have hoofs, and legs built for speed . . . they usually find safety in numbers.



Many of the hunters have claws. They're built to skulk and crouch and leap . . . their legs are short and powerful



Some animals just take it easy . . . they bother hardly anybody, and hardly anybody bothers them

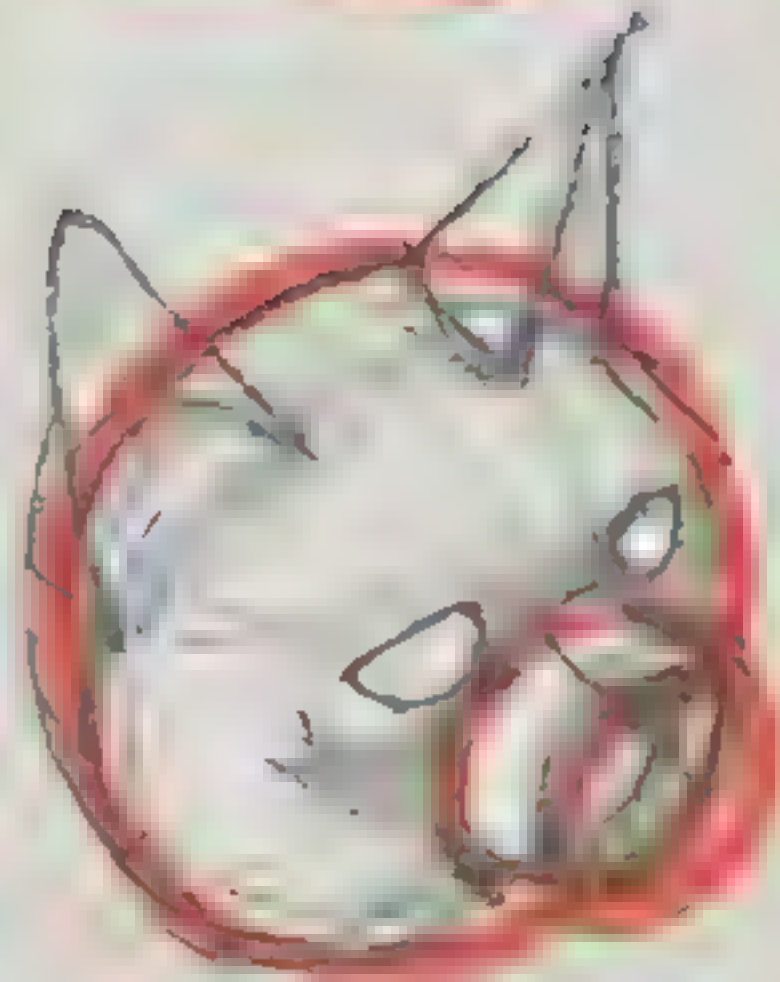


Shapes and structures

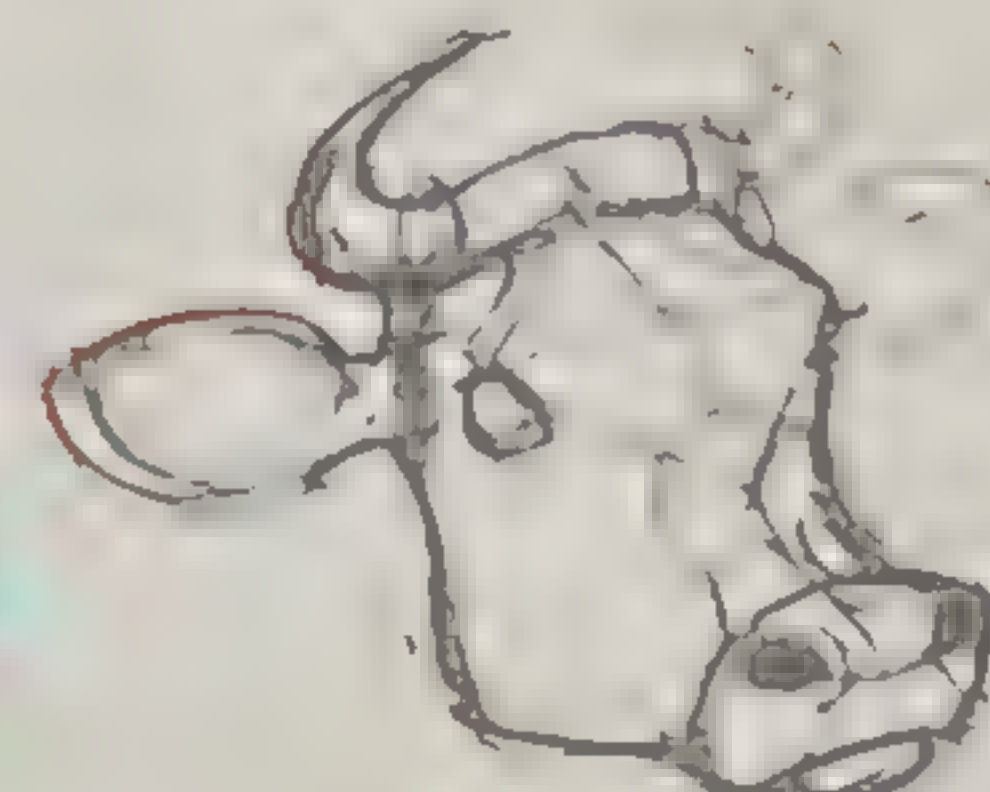
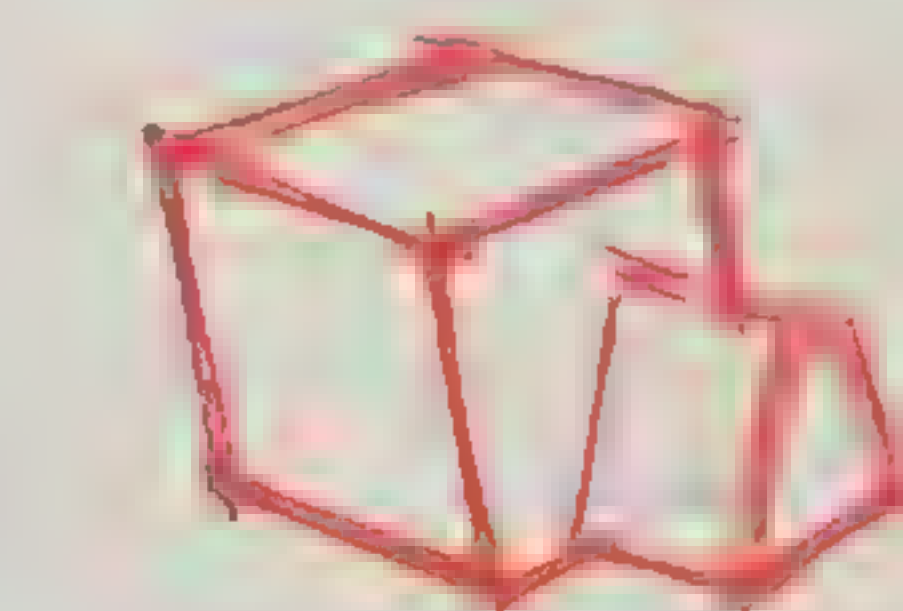
Study these facts about animal structure. If you understand the differences in the ways animals are put together, you'll look at cats, dogs, horses, cows — at all sorts of animals — with a more knowing eye and a better understanding of how and why their shapes differ. Then you'll be able to draw them with more confidence.

Head shapes

Animal heads begin with simple shapes. There are other considerations, such as the location of the eyes and ears, but learn to see the basic shapes first. A cat's head is a large round shape, attached to the smaller round shape of the muzzle.

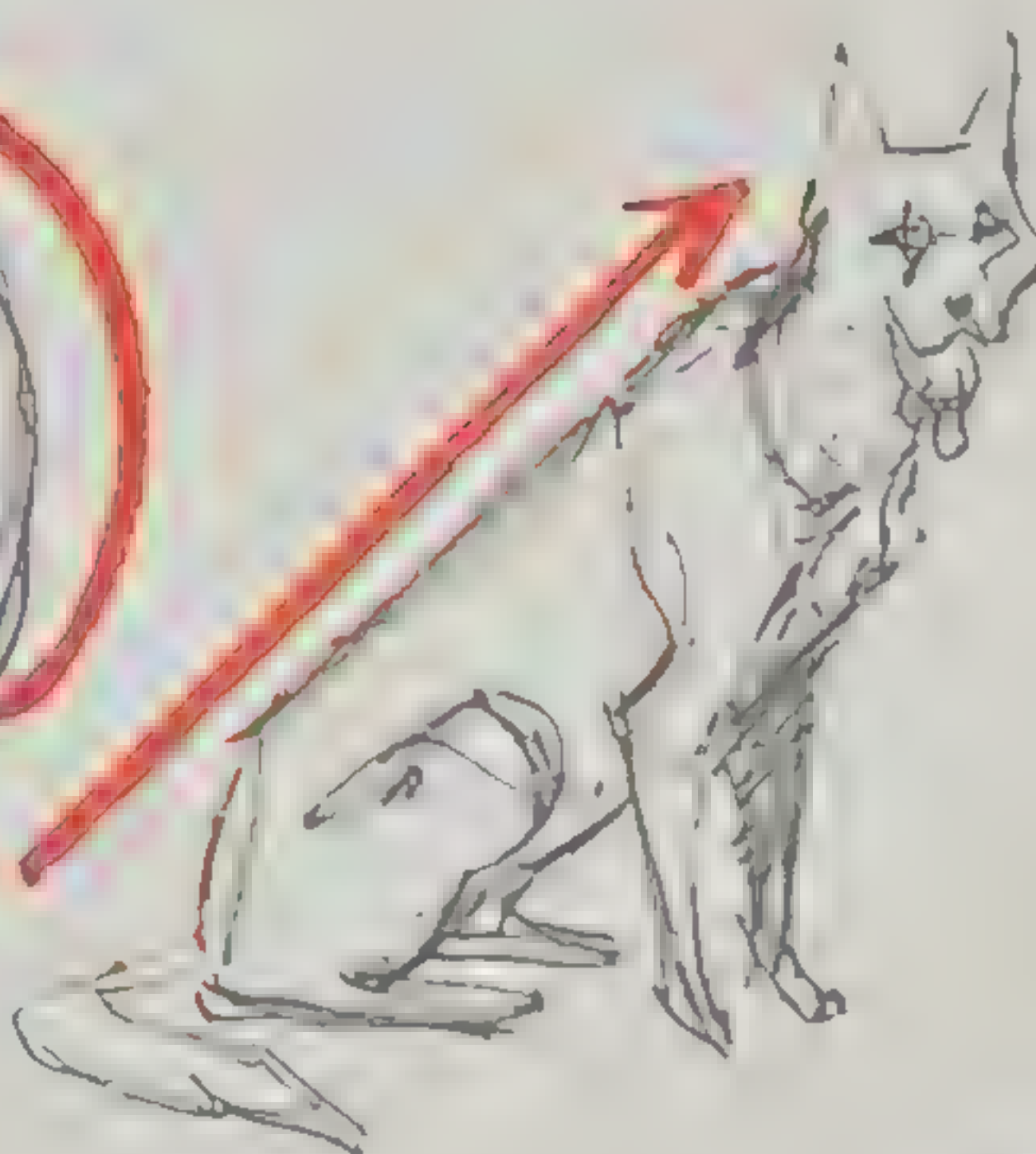


Dogs' heads are basically square; their muzzles are wedge-shaped. A horse's face is the shape of a megaphone; a cow's face is like a megaphone that's been stepped on. The eyes of both horse and cow are placed at the left and right tips of an imaginary diamond, set between the temple and the top of the muzzle.



Body lines

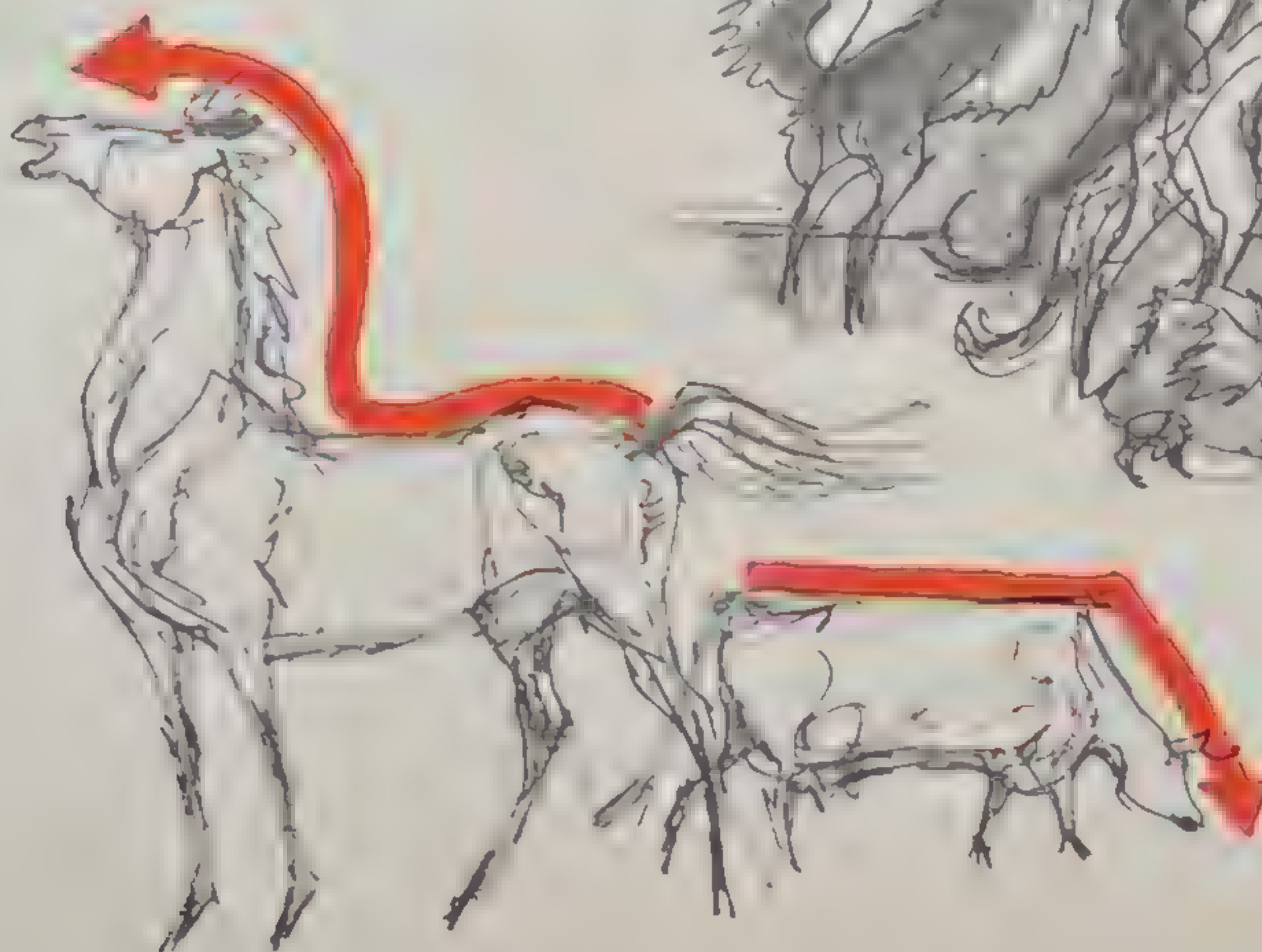
Pick out the differences in the way cats', dogs', horses' and cows' bodies are made. The cat is long, all grace and curves, while a dog's lines are straighter and more angular. The dog and horse have deep chests. As a matter of fact, except for the relative length of their legs, horses and certain breeds of dogs are very much alike. The back of a cow is almost perfectly straight from her tail to the top of her eyebrow.



A cat's back bends like a bow when he sits; a dog's stays straight as an arrow. A dog's spine is shorter and less flexible than a cat's.



Cats are all built pretty much alike, but every kind of dog has its own set of characteristics. You'll have to study each breed separately to see how it differs from the others.

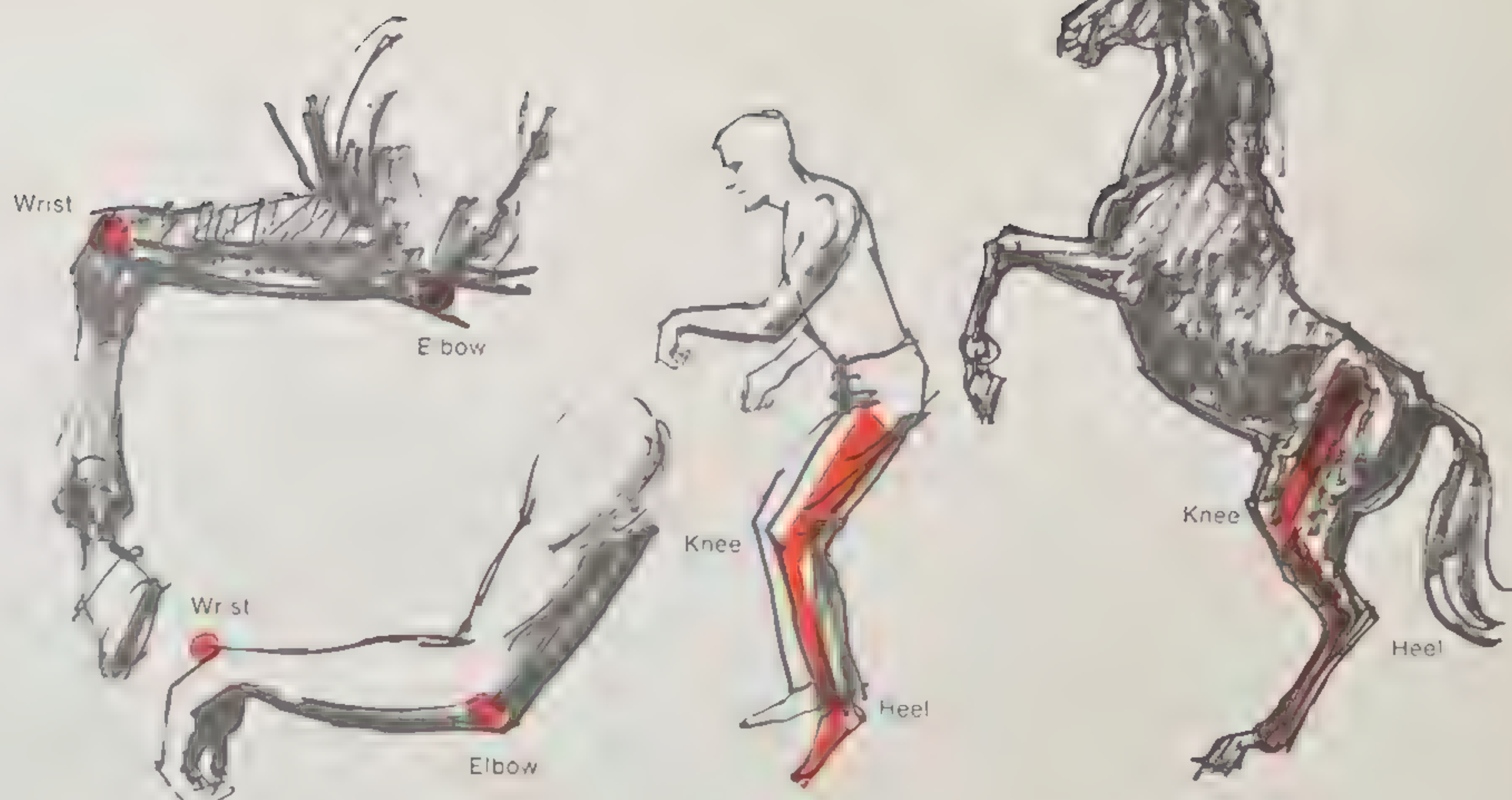


Cows and horses both bend over to graze, but a cow's neck is set so low on her chest she can't lift her head high, the way a horse can.



The frame's the same

Most mammals' bones are put together very much the same as people's are — in fact, nature used one basic pattern but with many variations, particularly in proportions. The main reason we seem very different from four-footed animals is that we stand upright. Too, our thighs and upper arms are longer than theirs. You can see by these diagrams that a horse's back leg joint, commonly called the hock, is really a heel. Similarly the "knees" of his front legs correspond to our wrists. These joints work the same as ours. Keep this in mind when you draw; if you "feel" how your own legs and arms bend you'll be able to catch animal positions more accurately.



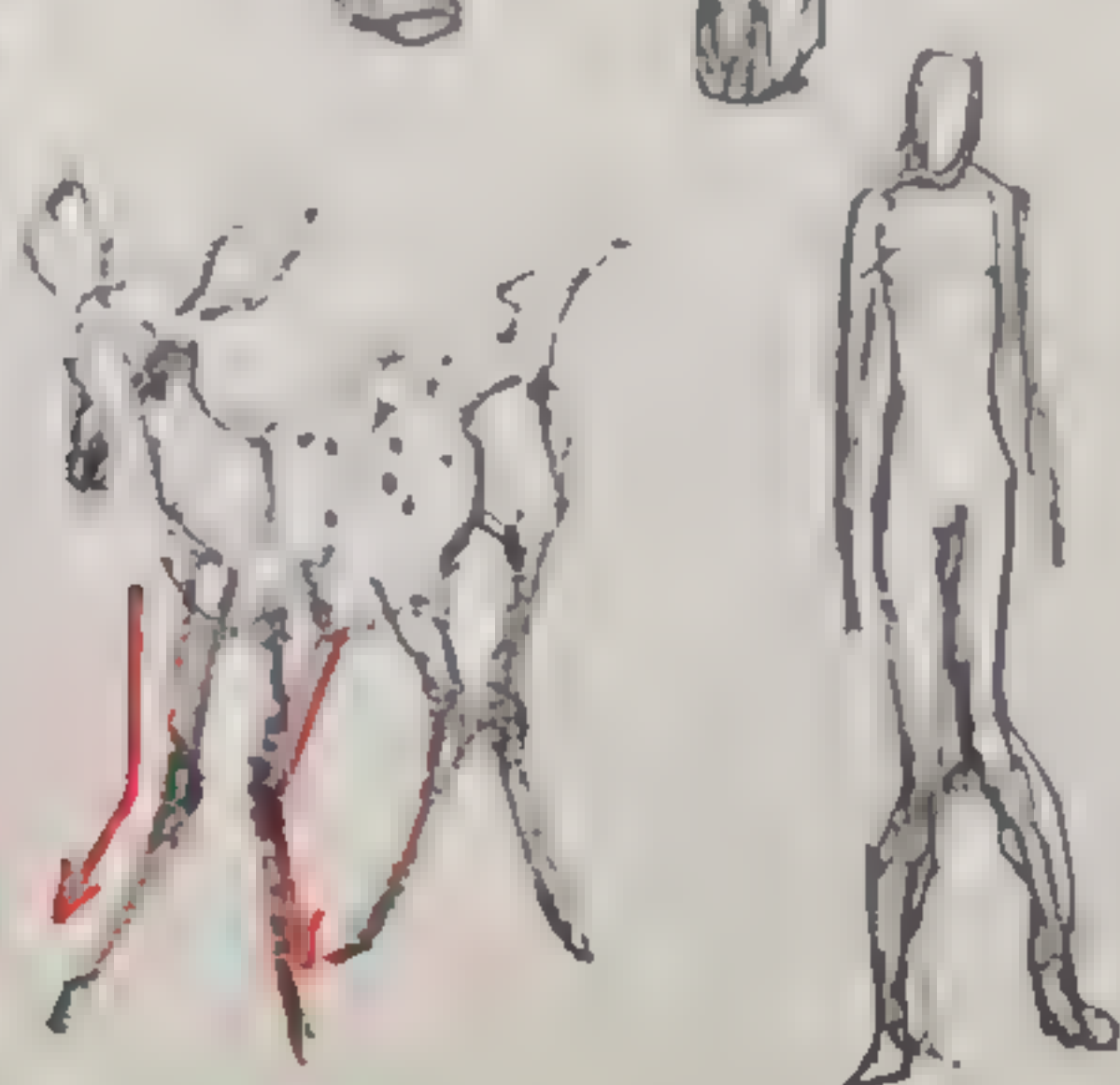
Get the legs right

Horses' legs are always a problem for beginners. Remember that they aren't tacked onto the lower sides of the body, but pivot from points high up on the hips and shoulders. Notice the way the legs bend — those mechanical hind legs (*left*) are bending the wrong way. Finally, don't draw legs that look too heavy. One of a horse's most beautiful characteristics is his long thin legs.



Knock-knees and bowlegs

Many animals, particularly when they're young, look knock-kneed from the front and bowlegged from behind. We all find their first youthful clumsiness irresistible. If you recognize these characteristics you'll be able to draw a calf, a kitten, a foal, fawn, puppy or any other animal baby so he'll look young and not like a small-sized full-grown animal. (This knock-kneed, bowlegged tendency lessens as animals get older but does not completely disappear.)

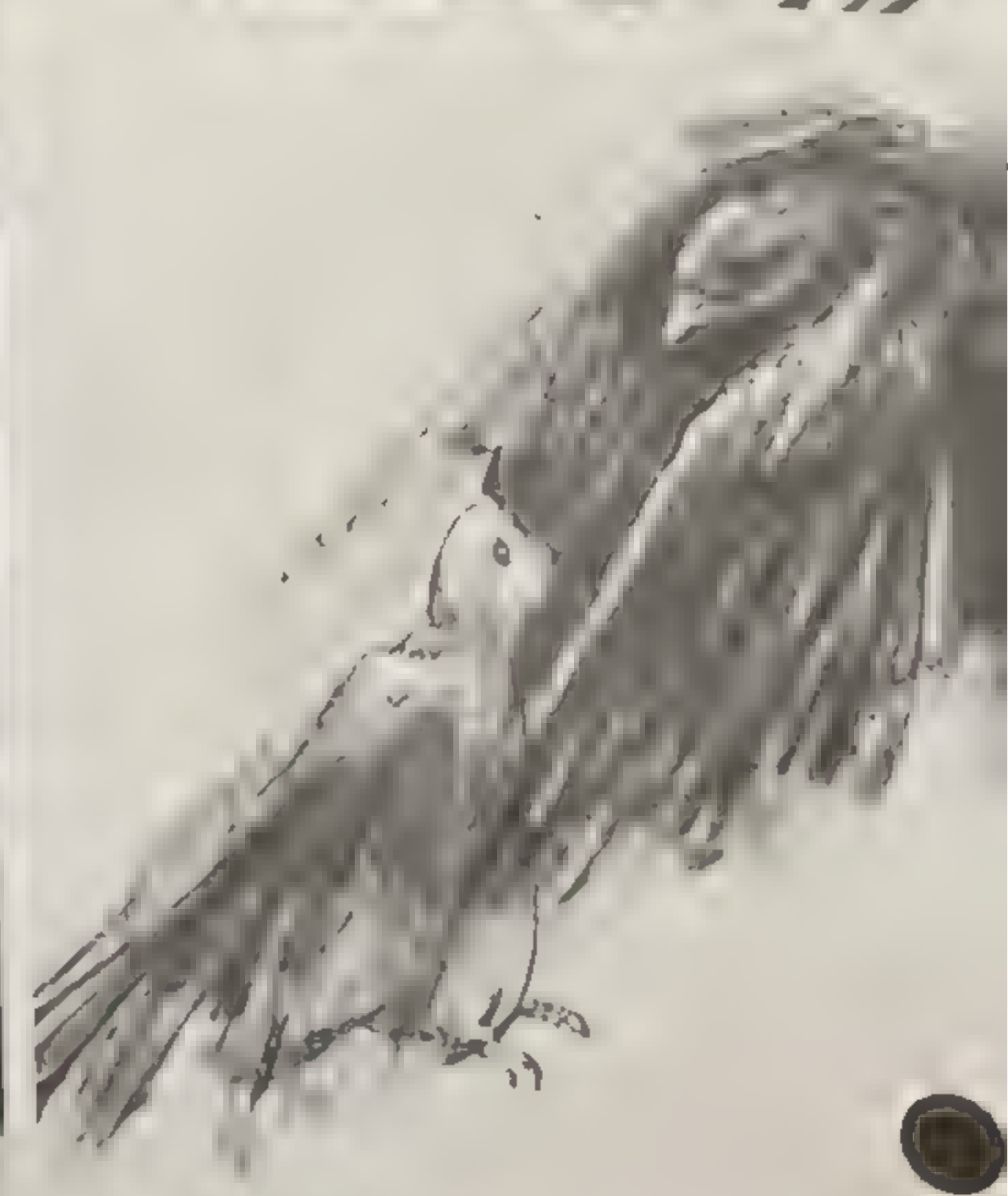
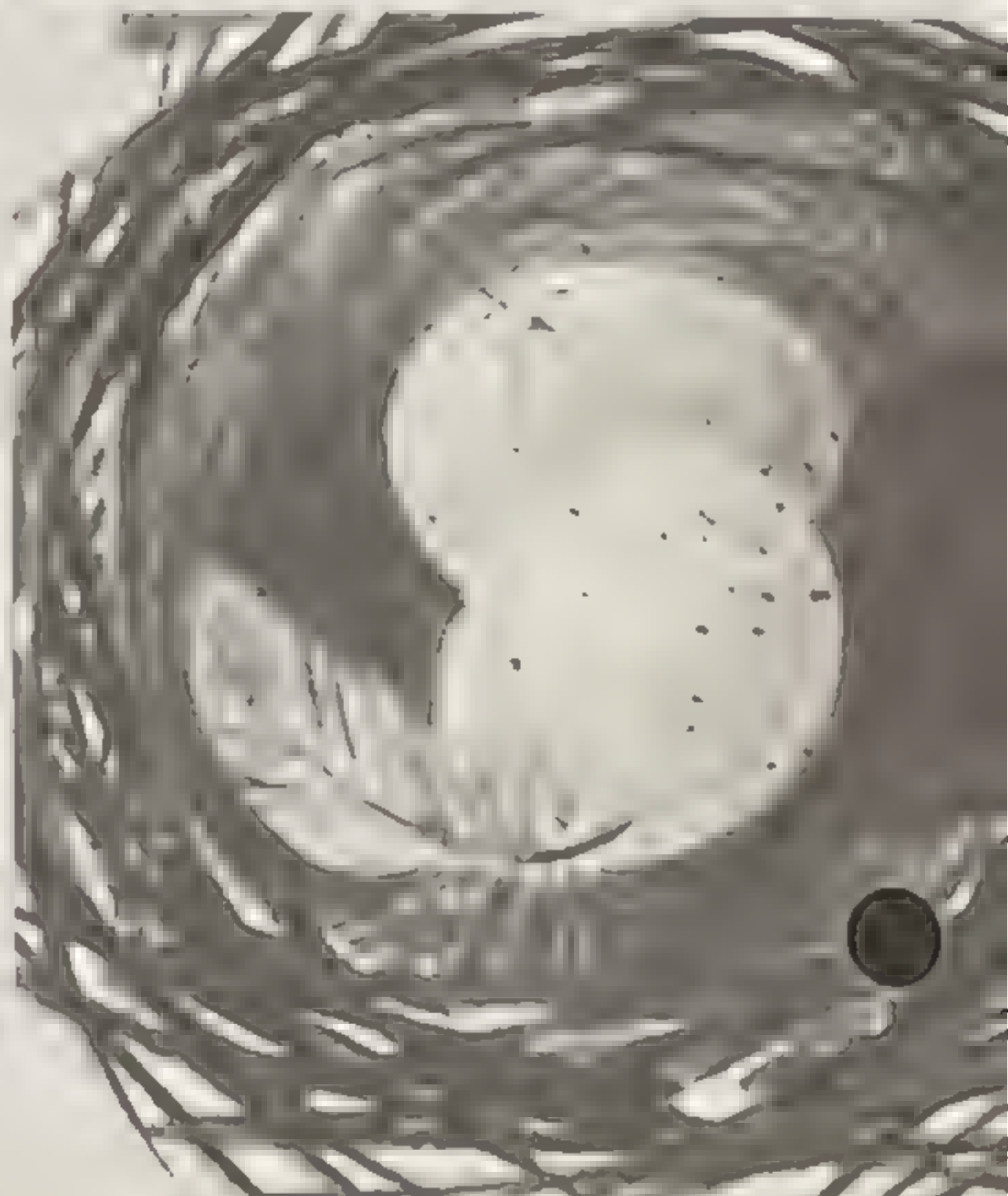
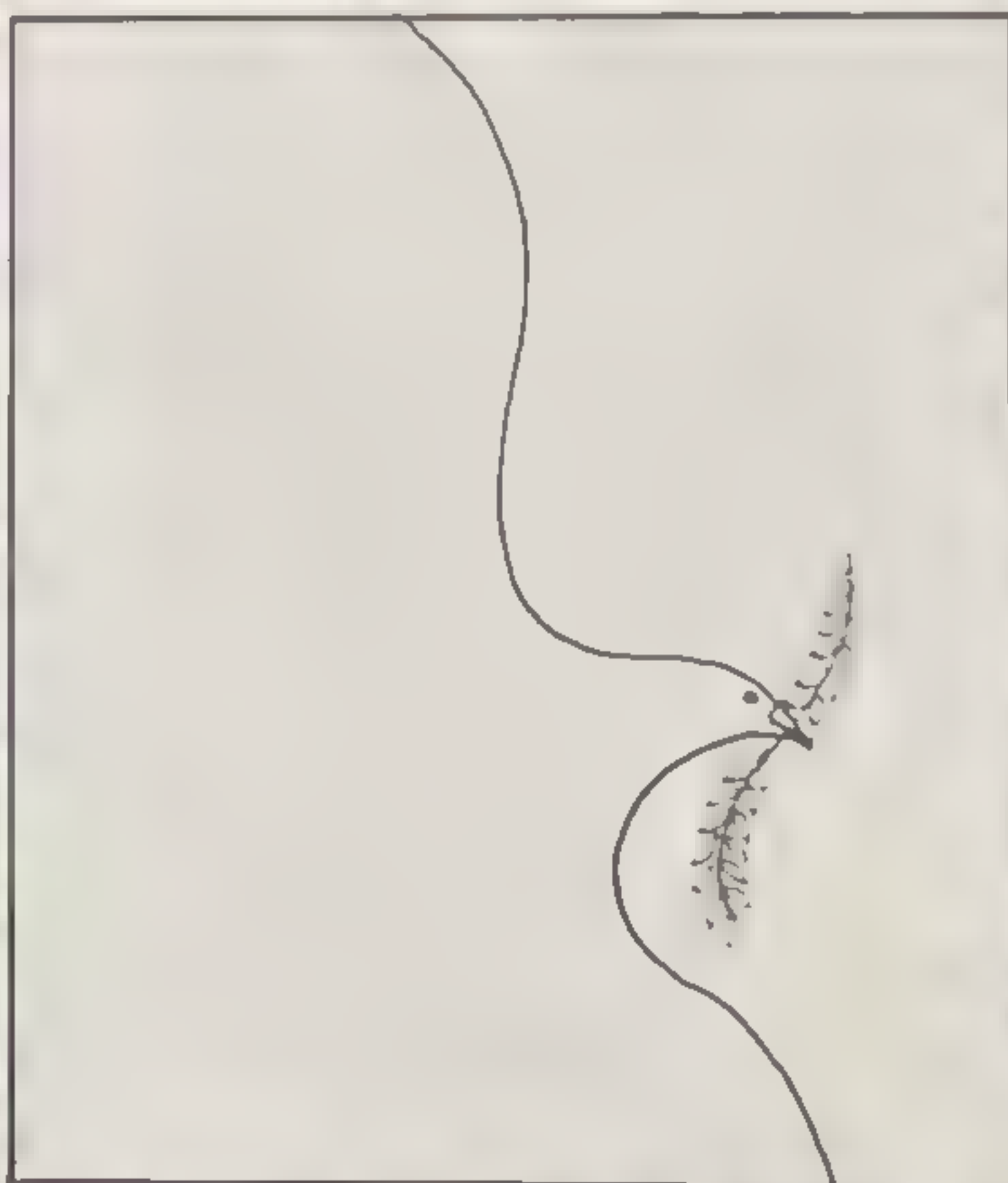


Picture ideas

Animals are so expressive it's fun to use them in pictures. To give you some measure of the many messages and moods you can convey with just a single type of animal, we chose the bird and designed a dozen pictures around him (*below*). Birds are a particularly expressive subject because they're the obvious symbol for so many ideas of man. In flight they represent freedom. In one kind of bird we see peace; in another, war. The raven symbolizes evil; the vulture, death and decay. A bird can be portrayed as joyous or macabre. It can be helpless or dangerous; it can convey tender motherhood

or furious aggression. The egg is a hopeful symbol — it means birth and regeneration.

Of course, birds aren't the only expressive subject in the animal kingdom — or even the best one. You could take any animal that you respond to, like a cat or lion or dog, and with it work out as many different picture ideas as we've done with birds. Let your approach be fresh and imaginative; avoid the trite, literal solutions to your picture problems. To put an object into an original context, to see it and use it in your own way — that is really being an artist.



Easton Museum of Fine Art
Photograph reproduced courtesy of Life magazine

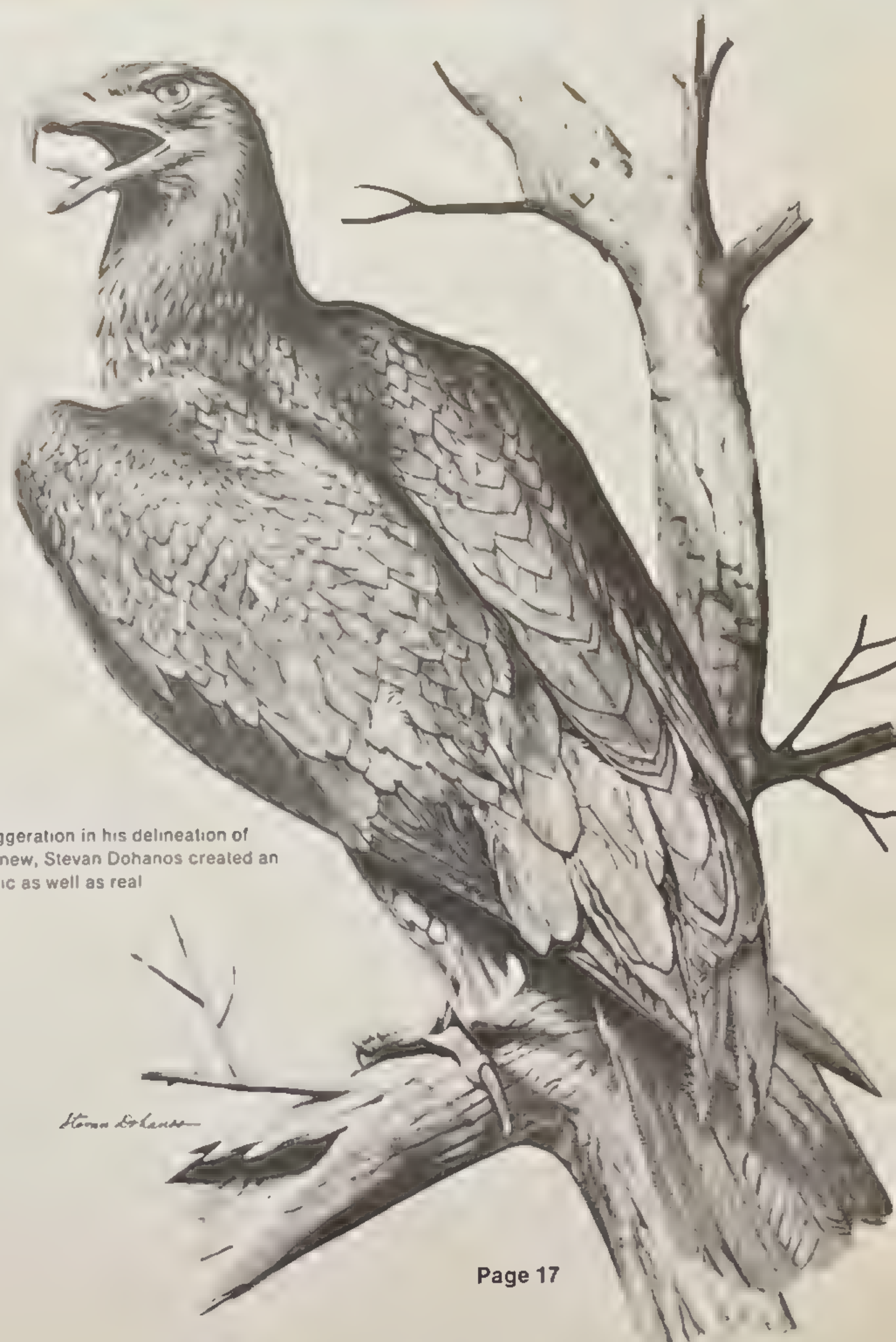


Even though such birds as these by Dong Kingman never flew across the real sky, they are convincing, they make us sense the freedom of flight

Here Edwin Reinhardt has caught in steel the enraged shriek of a fledgling, barely hatched. Is the bird protesting, or announcing, his entry into the world? The artist leaves the interpretation up to you




Albert Dorne Collection
Adelphi University



Through subtle exaggeration in his delineation of every feather and sinew, Stevan Dohanos created an eagle that is symbolic as well as real

Stevan Dohanos



In drawing, it's fun to emphasize the animal characteristics you can see in inanimate objects. Here, with only a little exaggeration, we've brought a snorting steam shovel to life

Animals we often miss


When you have animals on your mind, you can find them lurking just about everywhere. It doesn't take much to turn a roaring steam shovel into a wild, dangerous beast. A tractor can look pretty menacing, too, and so can a car tearing down the road, grille-fangs bared and headlight eyes blazing.

Have you ever seen animals in a cloud or a puddle of water or in the pattern of tree branches? Rocks and pieces of wood can be turned into animals, with just a little imagination. The most ordinary objects around the house can become animals, too, if you see them that way. Remember the bull Picasso fashioned out of two parts of an old bicycle?

It's great fun to fool around with everyday things and see what kinds of animals you can create from them. See what you can do with a spoon or a fly swatter or a bottle of ink. Or, if you like, try the materials we used. Just experiment as freely as you please. You may come up with a realistic version of a true animal, or you might invent a brand-new one.

We want this project to be refreshing and fun, but it has a serious purpose, too. Play is an important part of creativity. It can tap inventive sources we didn't know we had or jar us from our ordinary approaches and show us new ones.

Look for possible animals everywhere — on your way to school, at home, on the beach, in the woods, in the country, on city streets. Anything you find will do, as long as it looks like an animal to you. If you're stuck for an idea, there's a list of suggestions on the facing page to help you get started.



You'll have to find your own name for this armored creature. He's made of an egg carton, and his legs conceal a bent wire coat hanger that serves as an armature. His whiskers were once nylon guitar strings.



Ink blots form fascinating shapes, although you'll probably have to try several before you get one that reminds you of an animal. Drop some ink on paper that's fairly absorbent, then fold it down the exact center of the ink blot and press the two folds together. You may have to add a few touches with a brush or pen, as we did here to make the tail and eyes

This leggy bug has a peanut body and clear plastic wings. His long legs are straightened paper clips.



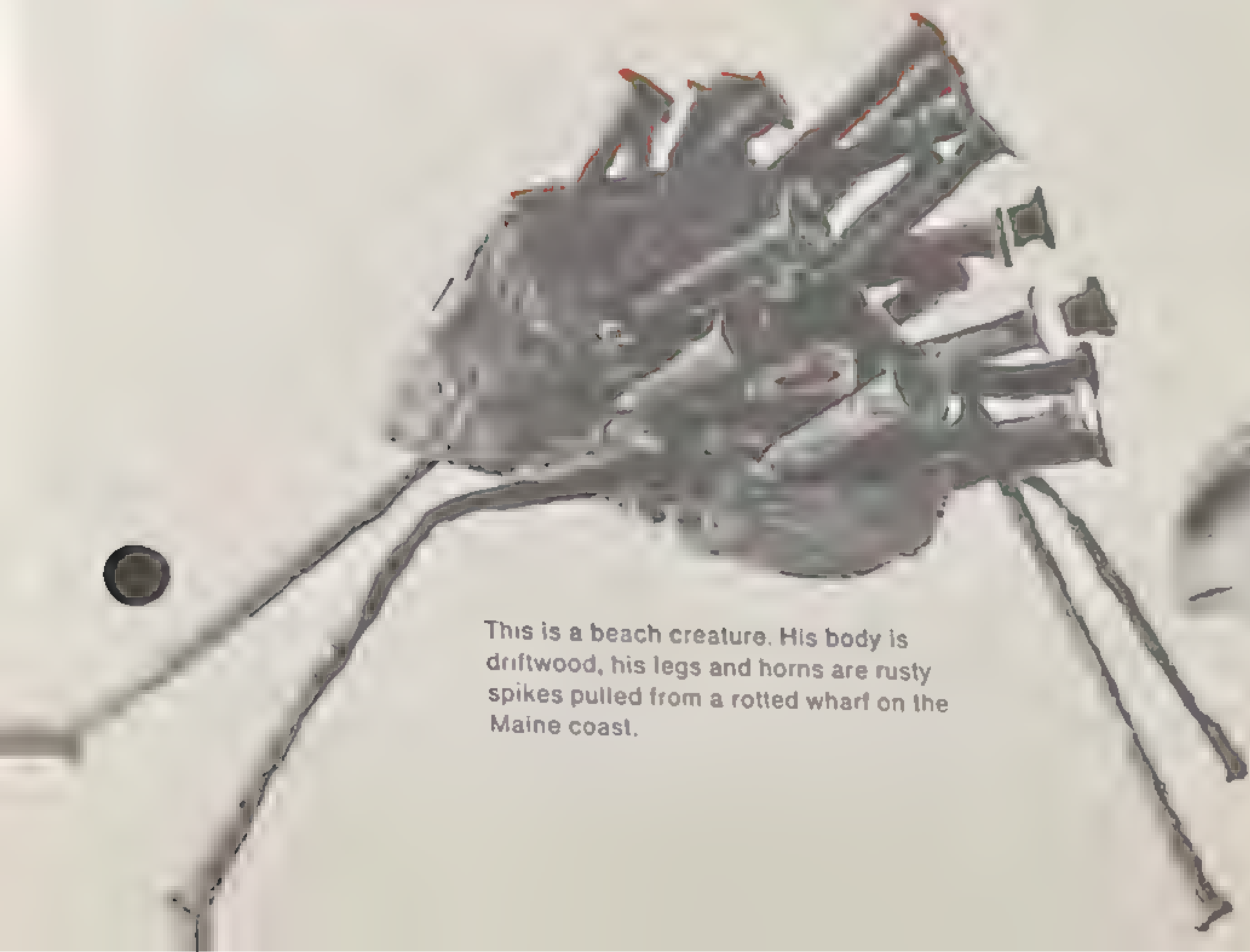
See what you can do with some of these
Use your imagination in putting together combinations that will immediately suggest an animal

Pipe cleaners
Wooden spools
Sponges and wire
Drinking straws
Worn-out kitchen utensils
eggbeater, cheese grater, etc.
Unusual fragments of metal or wood
Small machine parts
Old bedsprings
Paper plates, spoons and cups
Rocks
Throwaway pie tins

Except for his toothbrush teeth and wire whiskers, this daisy-eyed lion is made entirely from scraps of paper cut from magazines



This is a beach creature. His body is driftwood, his legs and horns are rusty spikes pulled from a rotted wharf on the Maine coast.



Gallery

A Hare, Albrecht Dürer
Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna



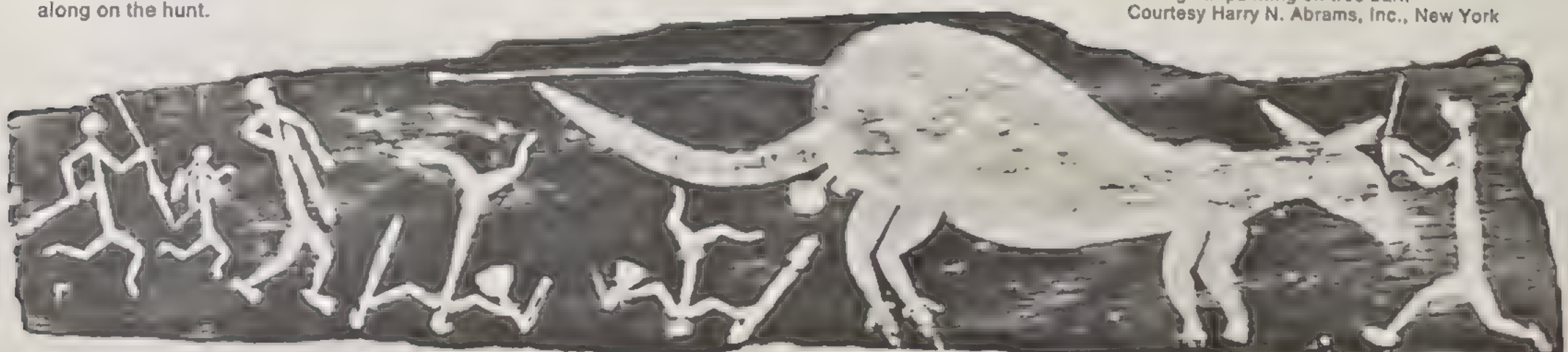
People respond to animals in many different ways. We fear some, love others. There are animals we admire, some we even envy. Such a rich mixture of feelings has made them, ever since the first cave drawing, an enduring subject for artists, and a natural means of expression. These examples can only suggest the range of uses man has found for animals in his art.

Naturalistic

Dürer, one of the most meticulous draftsmen of any age, painted this hare with marvelous precision and detail, even to the reflections of a window in the tiny, gentle eyes. Of course, precision alone didn't make Dürer a great artist. It was his ability to fuse his exacting observation of nature with what he called drawing "from the secret treasury of the heart."

Magical

Primitive men in Australia believe that a picture like this, of a successful kill, will lend magic powers to their tribal hunters. This drawing is made on a piece of bark so it can be carried along on the hunt.



Aboriginal painting on tree bark
Courtesy Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York

Eagle, late 19th century
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Symbolic

Man, in his fancy, sees traits in certain animals which he uses in a special universal language, the language of symbols. Thus, nearly everywhere in the world, the dove represents peace; the hawk symbolizes war. We all know that the bear is Russia, the lion is England and the bald eagle the U.S.A.

Reportorial

Charles Russell was a cowhand, a popular storyteller and a self-taught artist. He painted the last days of the open West, depicting horses, Indians and cowboys with a remarkable eye for both drama and authenticity.



They're All Plumb Hog Wild, Charles M. Russell
From *Charles M. Russell Book* by Harold McCracken,
published by Doubleday & Co.

Tiglon, Oskar Kokoschka
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Benjamin Scharps and David Scharps Fund



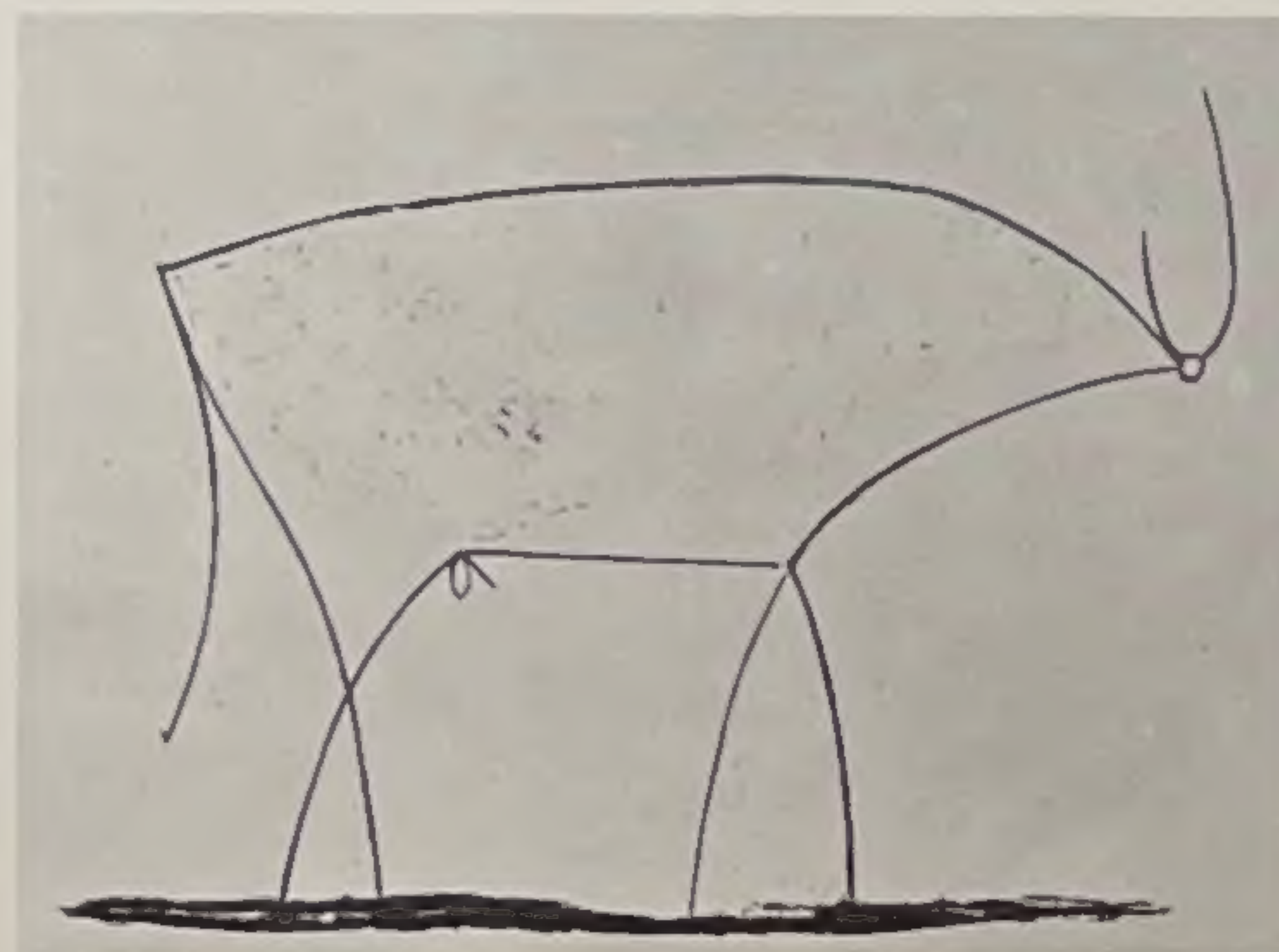
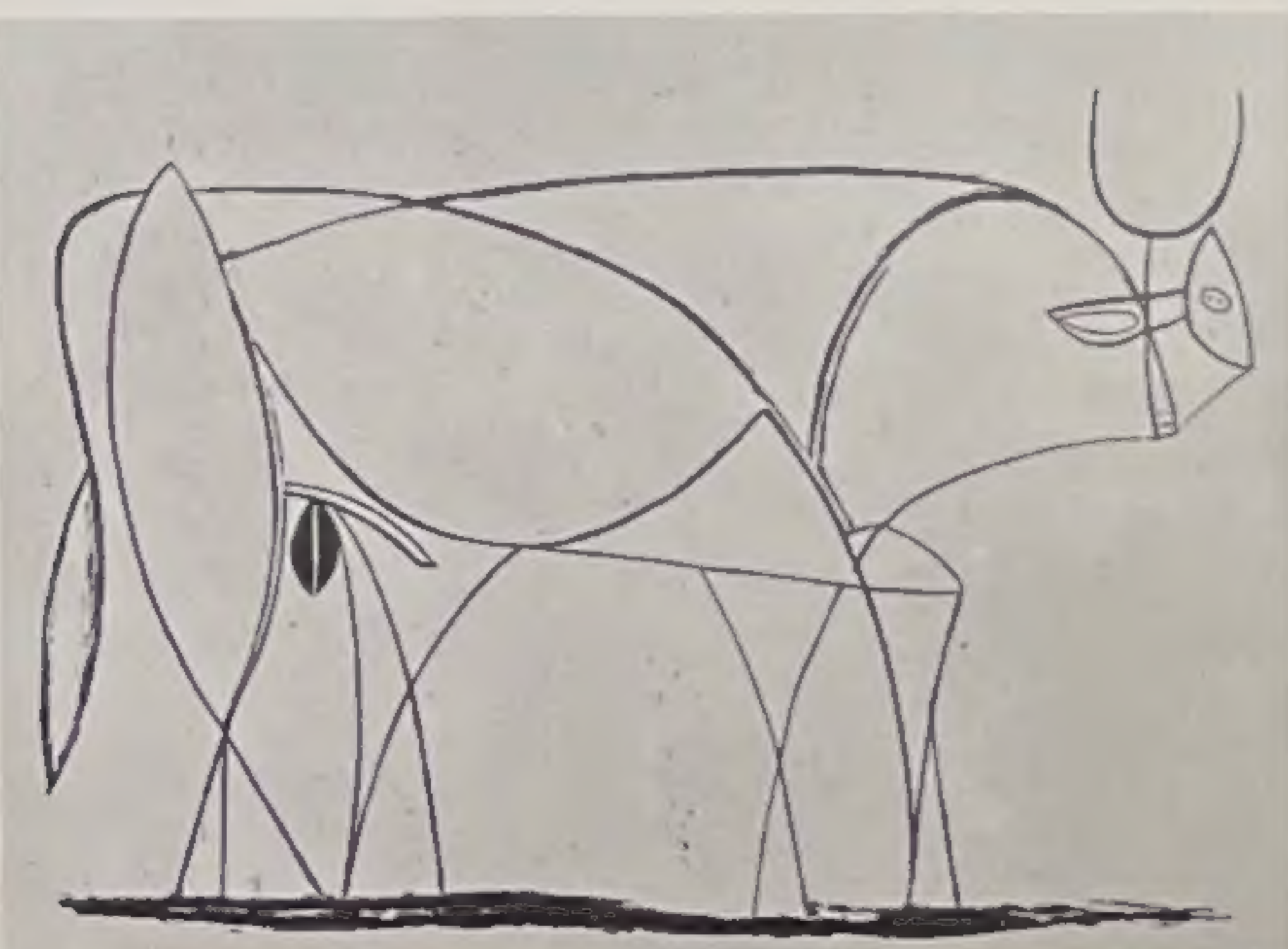
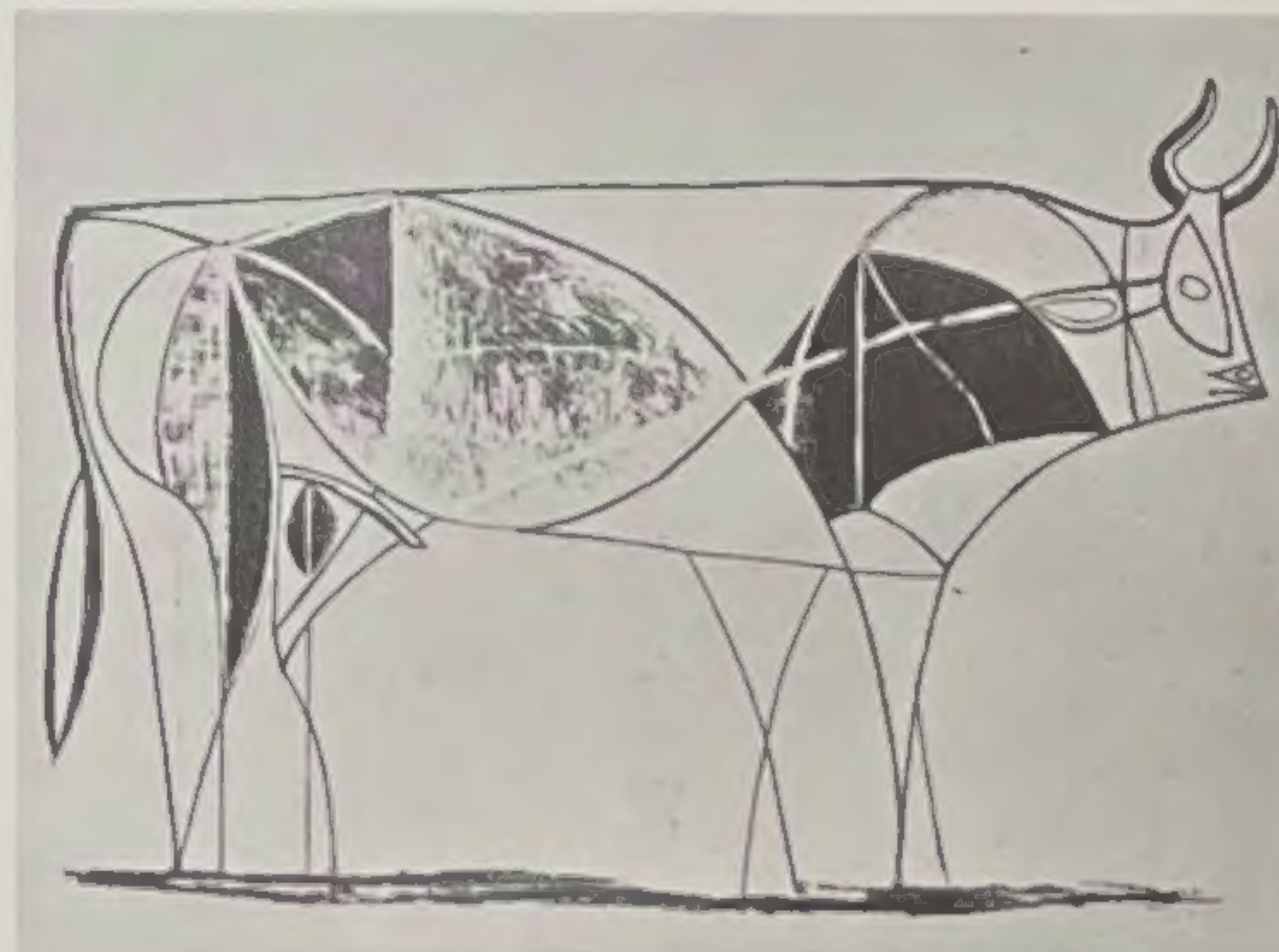
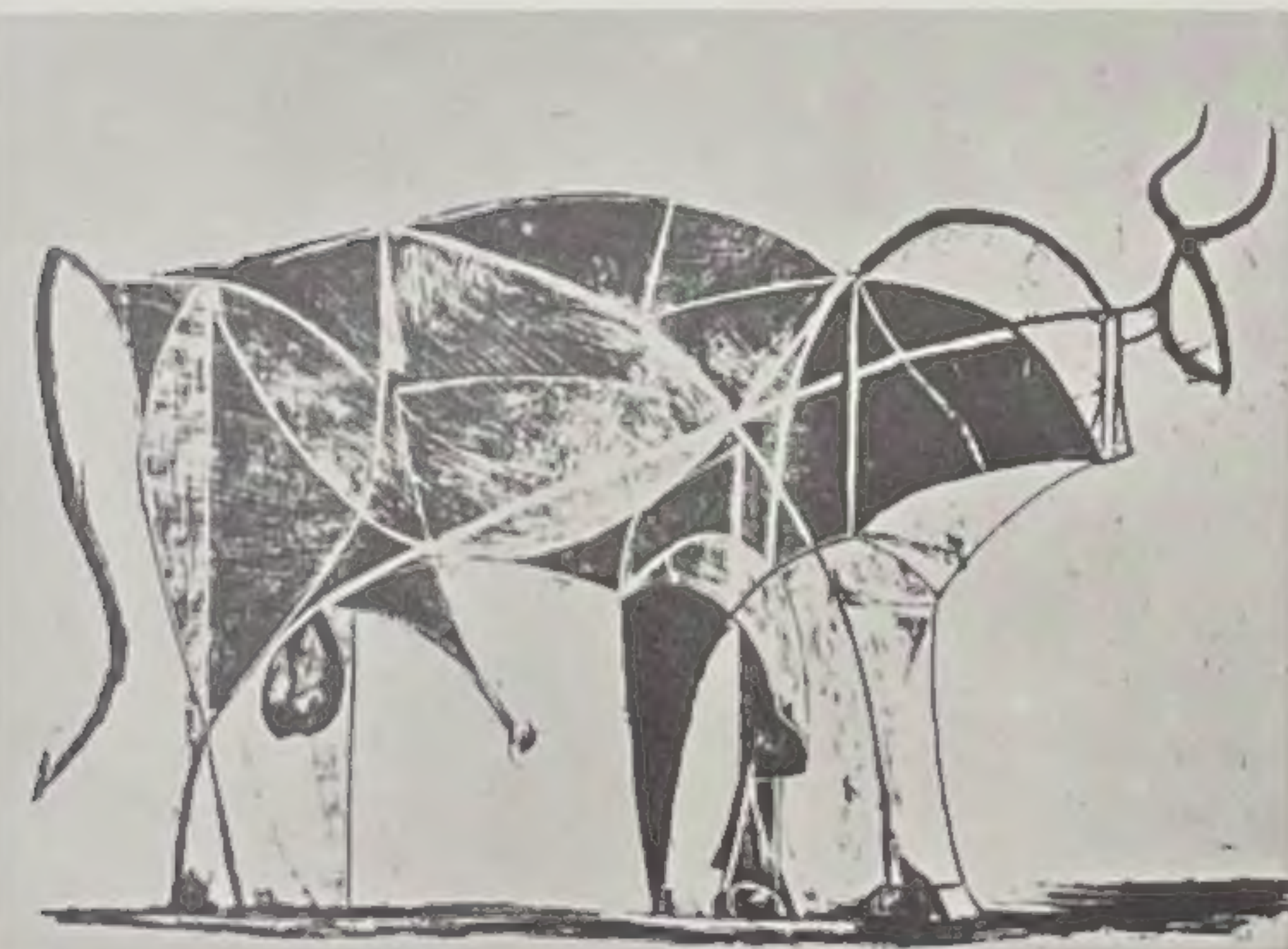
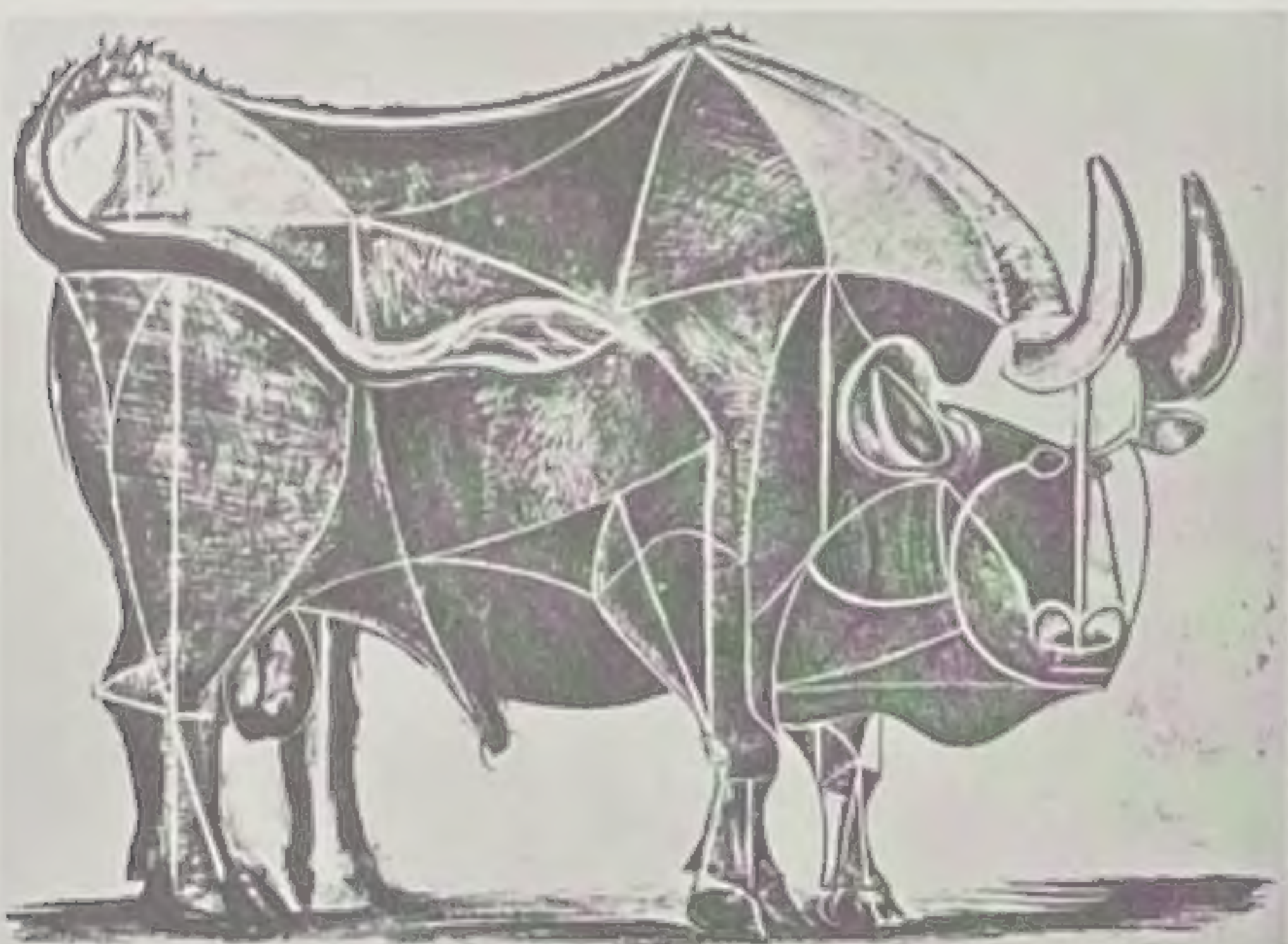
Emotional

Kokoschka is certainly not known to us as an animal artist, but there was a period, in 1926, when he went often to the London zoo to watch the animals and paint them. Here, focusing more on emotion than on accurate detail, the artist caught in heavy dabs of bright color all the killer strength and ferocity of a creature you may never have seen — a tiglon.

Approach your subject creatively

Starting with a rather beefy, three-dimensional drawing of a bull, Picasso set out on a creative search that led to the eight pictures below. Each drawing is a modification and a simplification of the one before, leading to the final version at bot-

tom right. That one is still very much a bull — described in fewer than ten lines. This kind of free experimenting is a good way of forcing yourself to see your subject freshly, and perhaps more creatively, too.



Important

These instructions are extremely important to you. Read them through carefully from start to finish. Do your assignment work only after you have done the practice exercises suggested on pages 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 18, and 19. Do not send these exercises to the School except as directed in your assignment instructions below.

"As painters, we must remember always that the spirit is more important than the fact." *Harold Von Schmidt*

To send to the School

Practice project

While you were studying this section, and as part of your practice work for it, you should have made many drawings of animals. We'd like to see two of these. Select one that you feel best shows an animal at rest. Select one that best shows an animal in action.

Under each drawing describe what kind of animal it is and what it is doing.

You may fold your drawings if they are too large for your mailing carton. Mail these two drawings to the School along with your assignment work.

Section 9 assignment work

We don't expect you to be an animal expert in one lesson. We want to see what you understand about animal drawing and painting and how well you apply the knowledge you have gained about color, composition, observation, and use of

medium up to this point in the Course.

For this assignment, make a picture of one or more animals, remembering that a picture includes a background. Do not make your picture of fish or birds. Work in oil or watercolor on a 16 x 20-inch sheet of Canvaskin or a 15 x 20-inch sheet of watercolor paper.

In doing this picture, pay particular attention to pages 16 and 17. Try to give us *more* than just a literal drawing or painting. Make your animals expressive in mood and attitude.

Print on the back of your practice work and your assignment picture:

Your name
Student number
Address
Assignment number

(over, please)

Cut along this line — and mail with your assignment

Section

9

Animals in art

Comment Sheet

In order for us to better understand your picture, describe it in the space below. Tell us what kind of animals they are and the attitudes and mood you wanted to suggest.

Name Student number

Date

Check before mailing

Your assignment carton should contain:

- 1 practice drawing of an animal at rest
- 1 practice drawing of an animal in action
- 1 picture of one or more animals on 16 x 20-inch
Canvaskin for oil, or 15 x 20-inch watercolor paper for
watercolor
- 1 comment sheet (on other side of this page)
- 1 shipping label filled out completely with your name and
address

Mail this carton to:

Famous Artists School

Westport, Connecticut 06880

Note: Be sure your paintings are thoroughly dry before
mailing.